

CONVERGE ESPERANCE

Business & Industry Forum

Event Program

Thank you for joining us!

Hosted by



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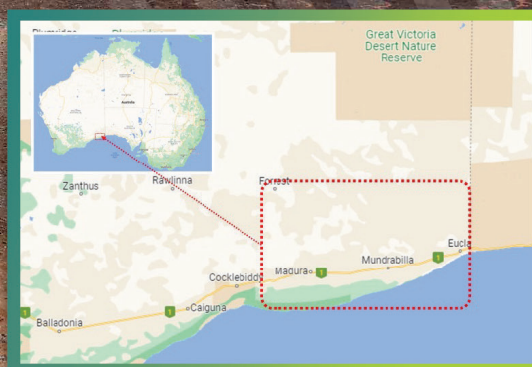
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Welcome

TO CONVERGE ESPERANCE 2025

Converge Esperance returns in 2025 as Esperance's annual business and industry event - a forum that unites community, commerce, and opportunity.

Converge Esperance 2025 explores current challenges and emerging opportunities across agriculture, retail, tourism, workforce, and regional development, with interactive panels, workshops, keynote speakers, and networking events.

Converge Esperance aims to empower business owners, community leaders and professionals to build a stronger regional economy.

More than just a conference, Converge is a convergence of ideas and people.

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Your Hosts

“Converge Esperance is brought to you by the **Esperance Chamber of Commerce & Industry** in partnership with the **Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission**.”

THE ESPERANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

The ECCI serves the business community of the Esperance region through advocacy, support and the promotion of economic investment and industry development. The Chamber provides unique networking and promotional opportunities, business development workshops and business advisory services to help local businesses succeed.

With a strong focus on inclusivity, economic development and diversification, the Chamber advocates at all levels to enhance the local business environment and ensure Esperance remains an ideal place to live, learn, play and conduct business.

The ECCI provide a wide range of resources and programs to help you grow and thrive. Visit the ECCI website to find out more WWW.ESPERANCECCI.COM.AU

THE GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The GEDC is a State government agency based in the region providing regional representation, championing local economies and advocating for the region across and beyond government.

The GEDC facilitates economic and community development across the Goldfields-Esperance region, collaborating with government and industry to promote economic development and liveable regional communities.

The GEDC works across a broad range of regional priorities including major projects, regional grants, housing and land development, industry diversification, climate resilience and workforce development.

Find out more about the GEDC and it's strategic priorities at WWW.GEDC.WA.GOV.AU.

Sponsors

Throughout this program you will see advertisements from our sponsors. Their generosity helps bring this event to life, ensuring we can deliver a high calibre, business and industry event year-on-year to the Esperance community.

Thank you to all of our sponsors for your support and the vital services you provide in our community.

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Australian Government
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Presenters and Panelists

KEYNOTES



Sam Collins

Head of Economics, Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA)

Sam has extensive experience in investment and economics, gained from his role as an investment analyst with Willis Towers Watson and in his current role as Head of Economics with CCIWA. Sam will provide an update on the global economy and discuss what this means for the Esperance community and our businesses.



Trent Rigby

Director, Retail Oasis

Trent is a leading retail strategist who works with brands to navigate shifting consumer trends and business challenges. He has experience working with many renowned brands including Akubra, Commonwealth Bank, Nespresso and Paspaley. At Converge Esperance, Trent will explore global retail insights and lead discussions on how to capitalise on these trends as a small business in regional Australia.



Estelle Madaffari

Founder, Merre Granola

Estelle is a farmer near Merredin in the WA Wheatbelt, where she farms with her children and husband, Paul. A mission to eat more of the world-class produce at their backdoor led Estelle to create Merre Granola - a thriving granola brand using 100% Australian ingredients. Estelle will share the challenges she has faced, the advantages and opportunities of running a business from regional WA and her experience with product development.



Kia Buckley

Director & Founder, Kikiva Collection

Kia is the founder of Kikiva Collection, a multi seven-figure e-commerce brand that was started from her home garage and driven by a dream to create affordable, high quality activewear accessible to everyone. An Esperance local now based in Perth, Kia will share her journey on starting a small business, unpack how she scaled her niche activewear brand and built a loyal community and customer base.

Presenters and Panelists

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)



Kitty Prodonovich

CEO, Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry WA (RCCIWA)

Having owned businesses in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Kitty has hands on experience on what it's like to be a small business owner in the regions. Former President of both the RCCIWA and Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KBCCI) and former Chair of the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), Kitty's wealth of experience positions her to be an impactful and relatable advocate for regional small business. Kitty is an experienced host for large scale events and is the MC for Converge Esperance 2025.

SPEAKERS



Tamara Virgo

Director & Financial Advisor, TV Financial Services

Known far and wide in the Esperance community, Tamara is a trusted financial advisor supporting regional clients with tailored wealth and business strategies. She will speak on financial wellbeing, business health, steps to take when in financial strife and how to achieve long-term financial resilience.



Kris Starceovich

CEO, Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission

Kris works across government and industry to deliver economic development initiatives for the Goldfields-Esperance region. With a dynamic background across education, mining and community engagement, Kris brings a people-focused approach to driving regional development. He will join the ECCI and Shire of Esperance on a panel discussing regional growth, small business support and local innovation.



Shane Liddelow

Manager Economic Development, Shire of Esperance

Shane manages the Shire's strategic focus on economic development, investment attraction and community growth. He will discuss the initiatives shaping Esperance's local economy and opportunities for future industry collaboration on a panel alongside the ECCI and GEDC.

Presenters and Panelists

SPEAKERS



Tim Napoleao

Acting Assistant Director, Department of Home Affairs

Tim is the Acting Assistant Director of Business, Industry and Regional Outreach in WA for the Immigration Outreach and Engagement Branch of the Department of Home Affairs. The Department plays a key role in Australia's skilled migration and workforce policy, helping shape pathways for regional labour attraction. Tim will share insights into how migration policy is evolving and the opportunities it presents for businesses navigating workforce shortages, particularly around skilled migration.



Lise Williams

Acting Manager Migration Services, Department of Training & Workforce Development

Lise plays a key role in delivering the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA). The DAMA provides access to a wider range of overseas workers than the standard skill migration program. Following the extension of the DAMA in the Goldfields-Esperance region last year, Lise will discuss what this means for businesses in the area and how they can make the most of the opportunity.



Bindi Isbister

Precision Agriculture Specialist, Agrarian Management

Bindi supports farmers across WA to integrate precision agriculture and make data-informed decisions. Bindi is the mastermind behind the GrainAutomate program and will be delivering the AgTech workshops on Day 1 of Converge Esperance.

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Department of Training and Workforce Development



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SCAN ME! 

Presenters and Panelists

SPEAKERS



Keith Wilks
CEO, Southern Ports

Keith leads operations across the Southern Ports network including the regional ports of Esperance, Albany and Bunbury. He will provide an update on major infrastructure projects, the new Southern Ports Strategic Plan and how investment in Esperance Port is supporting regional economic growth.



Annabelle Hender
Tourism Development Manager - Esperance, Australia's Golden Outback

Annabelle focuses on developing initiatives that drive sustainable development of the tourism sector in Esperance and the South Coast. With over 20 years' experience in the tourism industry across Australia, Annabelle brings with her dynamic ideas and approaches to combating some of the biggest issues surrounding tourism. At Converge Esperance Annabelle will explore the value of the tourism economy to Esperance and how we can balance social, environmental and economic factors.

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Presenters and Panelists

SPEAKERS



Raymond Macdonald

CEO, Western Green Energy Hub

Raymond is leading the development of the Western Green Energy Hub – one of the world's largest renewable energy developments at Eucla on the South Coast of WA. He will speak on the long-term opportunities for regional WA in the global green energy transition and what this means for our communities.



Saj Abdoolakhan

Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC)

Saj is the newly appointed CEO and Small Business Commissioner for the Small Business Development Commission. Bringing with him experience from many high level roles across government departments, Saj will share valuable insights to businesses from his experience in compliance and safety. He will discuss the role the SBDC plays in supporting small business and some of the resources available.



Jennifer Obourne

Executive Officer, Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI)

Jennifer leads ECCI's work supporting small business and driving regional advocacy. She will sit on a panel alongside Saj Abdoolakan, SBDC Commissioner and discuss the ECCI's role as the region's SBDC service provider including free and low cost services available to those wanting to start a business and those in business that may be seeking advice or guidance.

Silver Sponsor

Shire of Ravensthorpe

SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE
Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun, Munglinup

Proud to be supporting Converge Esperance
and tourism opportunities in our Region

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY & VISIT

Shire of Ravensthorpe

The banner features a scenic landscape of a river or lake at dusk, with a collage of smaller images on the right showing local activities like fishing, sunsets, and nature. The Shire of Ravensthorpe logo is in the bottom right corner.

Welcome Sundowner

THURSDAY 31 JULY 2025
5:00pm Onwards
Esperance Bay Yacht Club

Join us to launch **Converge Esperance** for 2025.
Enjoy canapes and drinks overlooking Esperance Bay.
Catered by **Aurelia's Ice Creamery and Cafe**.

ALL TICKET HOLDERS WELCOME.

Sponsored by SPAA & GRDC Grain Automate Program.

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GOLDFIELDS ESPERANCE

How we have been supporting economic development in Esperance

Successful Funding Attraction	• Esperance Smash Repairs • Esperance Tanker Jetty • Esperance Bay Yacht Club
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 **CONVERGE ESPERANCE**
Business & Industry Forum

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HORIZON POWER

Program

Day 1 - Thursday, 31 July 2025

Esperance Bay Yacht Club

Attendees can choose between stream one, agriculture tour and workshops OR stream two, industry tour.

Both streams finish at the Esperance Bay Yacht Club for the **Welcome Sundowner (page 11)**.

STREAM 1 - 8:00am-5:00pm

AGRICULTURE TOUR

Facilitated by SPAA, EZI & GRDC Grain Automate Program.

Departing/returning to Esperance Bay Yacht Club.

Onfarm automation demos

Snail cameras

Nuffield scholar recap

Brewery tour

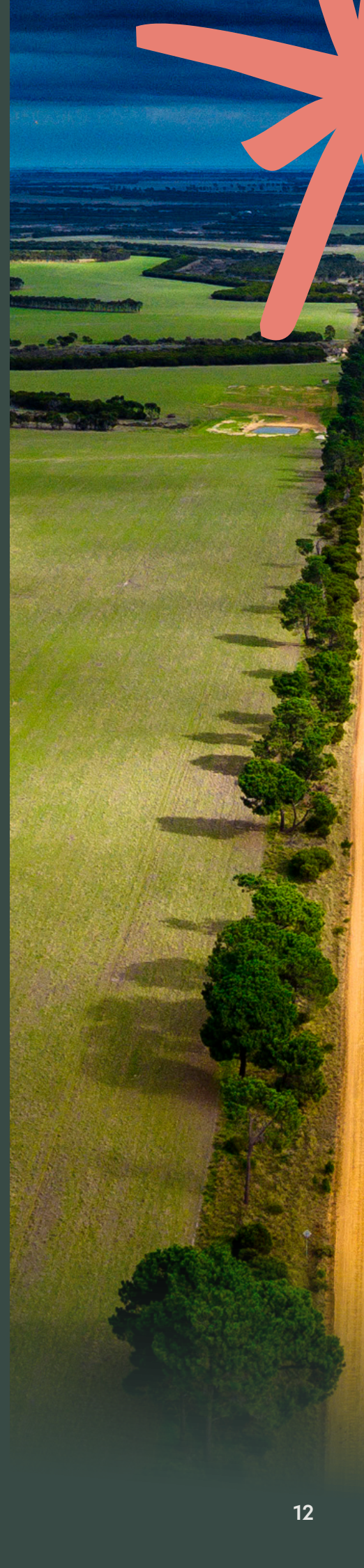
AGTECH WORKSHOPS

Facilitated by Bindi Isbister, Agrarian Management

Field to figures
Designing and analysing on farm trials

Digital success, not data mess
VRT Implementation

Better than blanket
VRT zoning processes





STREAM 2 - 12:00pm-5:00pm

INDUSTRY TOUR

Facilitated by ECCI & GEDC

Departing/returning to Esperance Bay Yacht Club

New boutique accomodation, **Box Hill Esperance**

Olive oil producers, **Yirri Grove**

Retail construction, **Dixon Construction**

Local business, **Flickr Candles by TBT**

New hospitality venue, **Pizza and Porter**

Community programs and sustainability projects,
Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation

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Local Jobs

Esperance



Employment Solutions for Local Regions

Workforce Australia Local Jobs supports individuals into employment and training opportunities to meet the needs of local employers.

Local Jobs is delivered in all 51 Employment Regions across Australia. In each of these Employment Regions the program provides for:

- an Employment Facilitator and Support Officer*
- a Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce
- a Local Jobs Plan tailored to local labour market circumstances, projects and activities funded through a Local Recovery Fund or the National Priority Fund

**4 micro-Employment Regions in Western Australia operate with an Employment Facilitator only.*



www.dewr.gov.au/local-jobs-program

WorkforceAustralia.gov.au

Program

Day 2 - Friday, 1 August 2025

Esperance Civic Centre

This full day conference features keynote speakers, panel discussions and networking opportunities.

CATERING

Meals catered by **Bistro Louis**, with complimentary barista coffee by **BeanBreak** on offer thanks to the team at **AvisoWA**. Available from 7:00am for a limited time.

TRADE DISPLAYS

Stop by the trade displays to connect with business owners and service providers.

7:00am	REGISTRATION & COFFEE
8:00am	Opening Address Welcome to Country
8:15am	Morning Economic trends & what this means for Esperance Sam Collins Skilled migration, workforce & DAMA Tim Napoleao, Lise Williams SBDC & resouces available to businesses Saj Abdoolakhan, Jennifer Obourne Southern Ports project update Keith Wilks Western Green Energy Hub Raymond Macdonald



10:00am

MORNING TEA

10:30am

Mid Morning

Global retails trends & the Esperance economy
Trent Rigby

Building brand community & scaling ecommerce
Kia Buckley

Product development, market gaps & adaptation
Estelle Madaffari

12:15pm

LUNCH

1:15pm

After Lunch

Practical strategies for SMEs
Trent Rigby

Panel: Retail facilitated by Trent Rigby
Flickr by TBT, Estelle Madaffari, Kia Buckley

Value of the the Visitor Economy
Annabelle Hender

2:45pm

AFTERNOON TEA

3:15pm

Afternoon

Business Health & Wealth
Tamara Virgo

Panel: Supporting Small Business & Regional
Economic Development
Kris Starcevich, Shane Liddelow, ECCI

4:15pm

Closing Address

4:30pm

CLOSING SUNDOWNER

*Sponsored by Regional Development Australia -
Goldfields-Esperance*

Enjoy local produce from **Lauren's Larder, Lucky
Bay Brewing, Esperance Distillery Co & Condingup
Vineyard**

Converge Esperance

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

BUILDING LASTING IMPACT

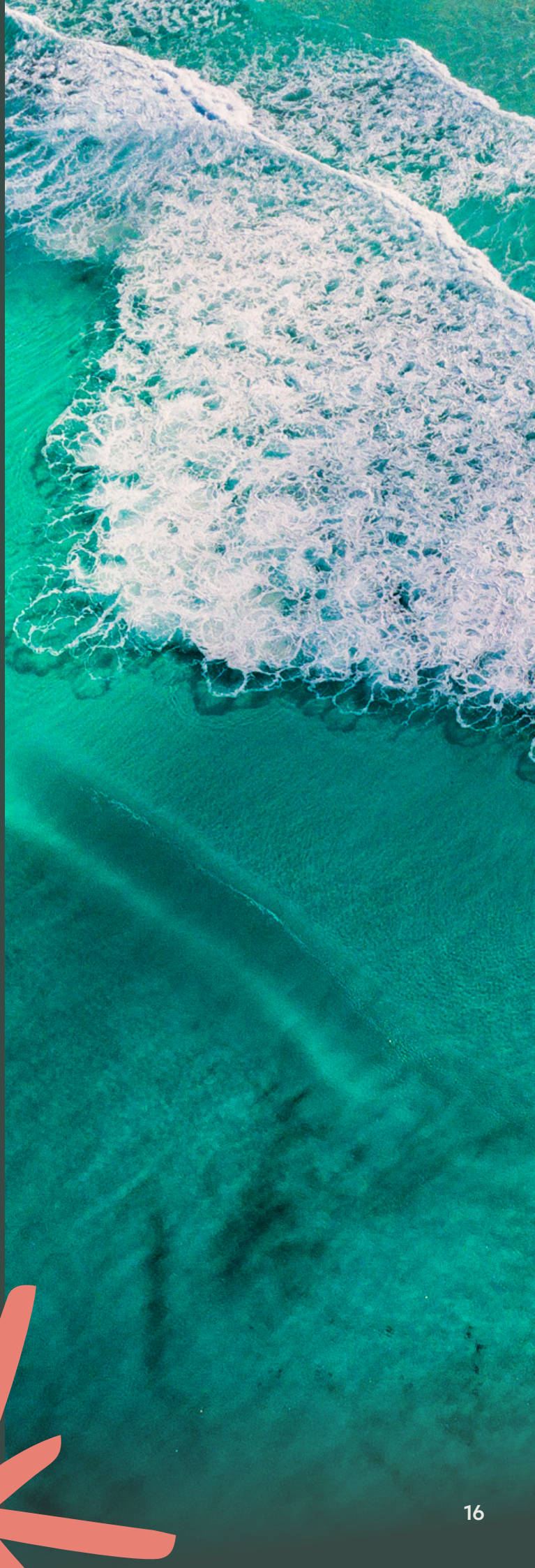
Converge Esperance continues to create meaningful economic and social outcomes for our region.

Converge Esperance is deliberately timed outside peak summer months to stimulate out of season economic activity and visitation. Converge Esperance is aligned with the Esperance destination brand and aims to strengthen year-round business and economic activity.

With over 20 local businesses involved in delivering the 2025 event, Converge Esperance is truly a collaborative effort that reflects the strength and diversity of our business community.

By supporting and attending Converge each year, you're helping shape a more connected, resilient, and prosperous Esperance.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO
WELCOMING YOU BACK IN 2026.



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Shire of Esperance

Where Innovation Meets Opportunity Invest in the Esperance Region

Why invest and do business in Esperance?

Strategic Location The Shire of Esperance is your gateway to thriving industries including agriculture, mining, logistics, and tourism – with seamless access to global markets.

Strong & Diverse Economy From creative technologies and smart agriculture to tourism and resource innovation, Esperance is driving a diverse and evolving economy.

Business-Friendly Environment Tap into a skilled workforce, benefit from government incentives, and leverage modern infrastructure designed to support business growth.

World-Class Infrastructure Home to a deep-water port, robust transport networks, and high-speed digital connectivity – everything you need to stay competitive.



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